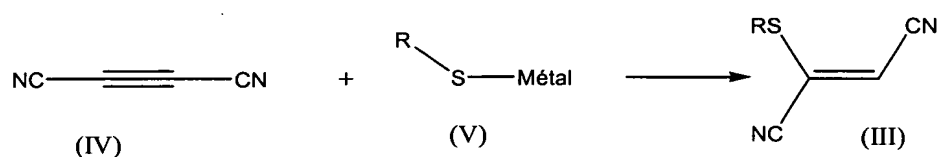


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A process for the preparation of compound (III) which comprises the reaction between a compound of general formula (V) and dicyano acetylene (IV), said reaction carried out in the presence of water



wherein R is selected from CF₃, or C₁ to C₆ alkyl and
M is an alkaline or alkaline-earth metal or silver.

Claim 2. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein R is CF₃ and M is silver.

Claim 3. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ carried out in the presence of an organic solvent which is miscible with water.

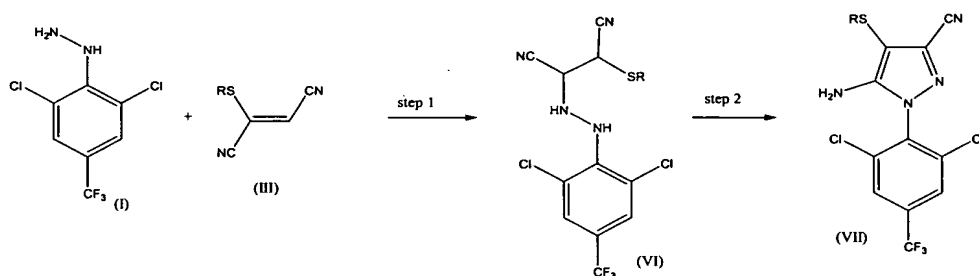
Claim 4. (original) A process as claimed in claim 3 in which the solvent is acetone or tetrahydrofuran.

Claim 5. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ carried out at a temperature of from -100 to +50°C.

Claim 6. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ carried out wherein the molar ratio of dicyano acetylene to the compound of formula (V) is from 5:1 to 1:5.

Claim 7. (currently amended) Novel compound according to general formula (III) as defined in claim 1 wherein R is CF₃.

Claim 8. (original) A process for the preparation of compound (VII) which comprises a first step of reaction of an aryl hydrazine of compound (I) with a compound of general formula (III) to produce an intermediate compound of general formula (VI), and a second step which comprises the oxidation of the compound (VI), according to the reaction scheme below



where R is a selected from CF₃ or C₁ to C₆ alkyl.

Claim 9. (original) A process as claimed in claim 8 wherein the compound of formula (VI) is 1-trifluoromethyl thio 2 - (2,6 - dichloro - 4 - trifluoromethyl phenylhydrazino) succinonitrile.

Claim 10. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~or claim 9~~ carried out in the presence of a polar solvent selected from tetrahydrofuran ~~tetrahydrofurane~~, N-methylpyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylformamide and dimethylsulphoxide.

Claim 11. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claim in 8 to 10~~ carried out in the presence of a catalyst selected from N-benzyltrimethylammonium hydroxide, or alanine.

Claim 12. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claim in 8 to 11~~ carried out at a temperature of from 0 to about 150°C.

Claim 13. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claim in 8 to 12~~ wherein the molar ratio of the compound of formula (III) to the compound of formula (I) is from 1:10 to 10:1.

Claim 14. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claims 8 to 13~~ wherein the second step is carried out in the presence of a quinone, a peroxide, a hypohalite or an alkali metal hydroxide.

Claim 15. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claims 8 to 14~~ wherein the second step is carried out in the presence of air and optionally a metal salt or oxide.

Claim 16. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of claims 8 to 15~~ wherein the second step is carried out in the presence of an aromatic halogenated or non-halogenated hydrocarbon solvent.

Claim 17. (currently amended) A process as claimed in claim 8 ~~any one of the claims 8 to 16~~ wherein the second step is carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 150°C.

Claim 18. (currently amended) Novel compound according to general formula (VI) as defined in claim 8 ~~claim 1~~ wherein R is CF₃.

Claim 19. (new) A process as claimed in claim 2 carried out in the presence of an organic solvent which is miscible with water.

Claim 20. (new) A process as claimed in claim 9 carried out in the presence of a polar solvent selected from tetrahydrofuran, N-methylpyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylformamide and dimethylsulphoxide.